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Just another day at the Salem United Methodist Church child care center in Cumberland County. (Photo ©2002 by Todd Gaul. www.photophile.com)



Fathers and daughters are part of our electric co-op.

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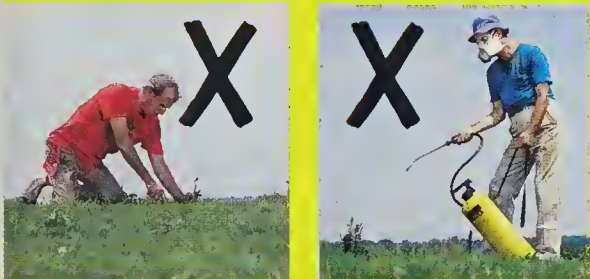
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2 ENDS RE-SEEDING NEVER NEEDS REPLACEMENT

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Frequently asked questions

By Michael E.C. Gery, editor



Soon after Carolina Country is mailed each month, your calls and e-mail messages stream in. Responding is one of the pleasures of our jobs.

Our business coordinator (and recipes editor) Jenny Lloyd usually receives the calls about how the magazine is addressed and how exactly to prepare one of the recipes.

The rest of us field other calls: Can I call gardening columnist Hank Smith? How do I order something from an ad? Is that an error on page 5? Can you tell me about that picture you ran three or four years ago?

As soon as the January 2002 magazine appeared, Jenny Lloyd took a call from a gentleman who complained about getting the magazine. "Why do I get this magazine, anyway?"

We expect these calls and do our best to respond completely. Contact us whenever you feel like it. Meantime, here are some answers to frequently asked questions.

Why do I receive Carolina Country?

Most of you receive Carolina Country because your electric cooperative sends it to you as a benefit of membership. (We also send the magazine to individuals who request subscriptions at \$8 per year.) I don't know of any other utility that regularly sends its customers a magazine that not only offers information about the utility, but also includes something interesting or helpful about where and how their customers live. Since they were formed, cooperatives have considered it their duty to keep their members informed about the business that the members themselves own. Among North Carolina's electric cooperatives, 15 publish monthly newsletters specifically for their members within the pages of Carolina Country. And our research tells us that more than 85 percent of you who receive the magazine not only appreciate what's inside, but read it regularly as well.

What about my address?

Each month your cooperative supplies an updated membership mailing list to the Carolina Country printer. Those lists are used only for mailing the magazine and for no other purpose. If your cooperative knows your correct address, the magazine will reach you. If your address changes, and you're still served by your cooperative, notify the co-op office of the address change.

How come I get more than one magazine?

If you receive more than one, you may have more than one electricity account. In any event, contact your cooperative to see if they can adjust their list to send you just one.

Does the magazine increase my electric bill?

We run a very lean operation here. Except for some other electric cooperative magazines in the U.S. (there are 29 magazines like Carolina Country published by electric cooperatives), you probably can't find a monthly consumer magazine that operates on a budget as tight as ours. Paid advertising accounts for nearly half our budget, while your co-op pays about 30 cents apiece for each issue including postage (that's less than the cost of a first-class postage stamp).

Are the advertisers honest?

We have long relationships with many of our advertisers. We appreciate their support of Carolina Country, and we know that they appreciate the business they get in return. Whenever a reader informs us of a problem they experience, we investigate. If any complaint is legitimate, we drop the advertiser.

How can I buy an ad or a subscription?

Give us your address and we'll send you a kit with all the prices, sizes and specifications. You can also find this information on our web site at www.carolinacountry.com. We are not yet set up to take credit card orders.

How come you don't answer when I call?

We can't always be right by the phone, but we all have "voice mail" and will call you back if you leave a message.

Can I call Hank Smith with a gardening question?

Our gardening columnist, Hank Smith, produces one of the most popular pages in the magazine. However, we protect the privacy of all our editorial contributors. We are glad to forward letters to them.

Will you publish my poem or a picture of my pet?

We're pleased by how much our readers contribute to the magazine each month, and we encourage your submissions. But we receive far more than we can publish. If we believe something will be especially interesting to other readers, we try to publish it eventually. Otherwise we will return it if you supply a self-addressed envelope with sufficient postage.

Are all your staff members married?

All but one.



Ken Hammond, USDA

Matthew Grant (left) was "like a father" for Curtis Wynn.

The legacy of Matthew Grant (1918-2001)

By Curtis Wynn

As the new year dawned, one of the most influential persons this area has ever seen passed away quietly. Matthew Grant, may he rest in peace, made a mark in our part of northeastern North Carolina that carried beyond these communities, into the halls of government in Raleigh and Washington, D.C., and into the hearts and souls of those of us who knew him.

Matthew Grant was a farmer and business owner in Halifax County. He and his wife, Florenza (who died just a few months before he died), had six children, one who preceded him in death, who today reflect the perseverance and compassion of their parents. He was a respected member of his church, Galilee Baptist Church. And he was a longtime board member and president of Roanoke Electric Cooperative.

In the 1960s, Mr. Grant recognized that one of the most visible and important businesses in this area – Roanoke Electric Cooperative – was not fairly representative of the people it served. And this, he would say, was a business that the people themselves created and, in fact, owned. Why, he asked, did this cooperative, which served some 13,000 households and businesses in seven counties, a majority of whom were African-American, not have a single black person elected to the board of directors?

At that time, and even today, those issues were not easy to raise. Someone with courage and credibility needed to do it. Matthew Grant, along with the late Rascoe Gilliam, who had a farm in Bertie County, were those people. And they had no trouble gaining the support of people in the community.

In 1970, Mr. Grant and Mr. Gilliam were the first African-Americans elected to our cooperative's board of directors. They were the first African-Americans elected to the board of any North Carolina electric cooperative.

Once on the board, Mr. Grant did not sit back while others made all of the decisions. He worked continuously and carefully at urging other blacks to serve on the board and to work for the cooperative. By 1991, the Roanoke board contained a majority of African-Americans, just as the communi-

ties we serve. And in 1992, he was elected board president and served as president until last year.

Matthew Grant always will be remembered for insisting that all customers of the utility – regardless of their stature in the community or the size of their account or where they lived – be considered no differently than any other customer. This, too, was not easy to do. But Matthew Grant had a quiet, steady, no-nonsense way of getting his point across. And he did not give up when he knew he was right.

One time at a conference in Raleigh, where we had appointments with state legislators to discuss issues important to the communities we serve, our staff was going on and on with facts and figures and drawn-out statements on this or that, and Mr. Grant was just listening until he stopped it all and said something like, "Look. We serve a lot of people in that area. We know what we're talking about. And we deliver a lot of votes." End of discussion.

This was a man who could tell right from wrong like he could tell a bull from a cow. It was Matthew Grant who initiated and pursued the right of black farmers to be treated like any other farmer when it came to U.S. Department of Agriculture loans and other programs. His perseverance, fueled by the energy of his son Gary, resulted in a major settlement that has clearly benefited the business prospects of black farmers everywhere. Congresswoman Eva Clayton reminded the community of this when she spoke at his wake in January.

And he was a man who was as compassionate and generous as he was stern. Matthew Grant paved the way for the Concerned Citizens of Tillery, a community-built organization in Halifax County that has gained national recognition in the past 10 years for developing local health and elderly care services, among others. And he treated people with respect and caring, no matter who they were. I can't tell you how many people – and not all of them from around here – say they consider Matthew Grant like a father to them. I, too, am one of those people.

You might think that as a businessman, Mr. Grant would also insist on the most conservative approach to running something as important as a utility owned by its customers. But since 1997, when I became the CEO here — and he was the one who offered me the job — Matthew Grant could see the value of a cooperative offering other needed services for this area. He supported our staff and our expansion, yet he strongly reminded us to pay attention to our core business of electric service and community development.

I've gone on long enough about this gentleman who has been a great advisor and leader to many of us. (He usually said what he meant to say in 10 words or less.) We will miss him. But we only need to look around us to remember him.

Curtis Wynn is CEO and executive vice president of Roanoke Electric Cooperative, which serves more than 14,500 accounts in Bertie, Chowan, Gates, Halifax, Hertford, Northampton and Perquimans counties.



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24	----	----	9.53	9.10	14.65	13.56	23.18	21.00
25	----	----	9.53	9.10	14.65	13.56	23.18	21.00
26	----	----	9.53	9.18	14.65	13.78	23.18	21.43
27	----	----	9.62	9.18	14.87	13.78	23.62	21.43
28	----	----	9.62	9.18	14.87	13.78	23.62	21.43
29	----	----	9.62	9.18	14.87	13.78	23.62	21.43
30	----	----	9.62	9.18	14.87	13.78	23.62	21.43
31	----	----	9.62	9.18	14.87	13.78	23.62	21.43
32	----	----	9.62	9.18	14.87	13.78	23.62	21.43
33	----	----	9.62	9.18	14.87	13.78	23.62	21.43
34	----	----	9.71	9.18	15.09	13.78	24.06	21.43
35	----	----	9.71	9.27	15.09	14.00	24.06	21.87
36	----	----	9.71	9.36	15.09	14.21	24.06	22.31
37	----	----	9.71	9.45	15.09	14.43	24.06	22.75
38	----	----	9.80	9.53	15.31	14.65	24.50	23.18
39	----	----	9.88	9.71	15.53	15.09	24.93	24.06
40	----	----	10.06	9.80	15.96	15.31	25.81	24.50
41	----	----	10.23	9.97	16.40	15.75	26.68	25.37
42	----	----	10.32	10.15	16.62	16.18	27.12	26.25
43	----	----	10.50	10.32	17.06	16.62	28.00	27.12
44	----	----	10.67	10.50	17.50	17.06	28.87	28.00
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50	----	----	13.65	12.07	24.93	21.00	43.75	35.87
51	----	----	14.35	12.42	26.68	21.87	47.25	37.62
52	----	----	14.96	12.77	28.21	22.75	50.31	39.37
53	----	----	15.66	13.12	29.96	23.62	53.81	41.12
54	----	----	16.45	13.65	31.93	24.93	57.75	43.75
55	----	----	17.41	14.17	34.34	26.25	62.56	46.37
56	----	----	18.37	14.78	36.75	27.78	67.37	49.43
57	----	----	19.51	15.40	39.59	29.31	73.06	52.50
58	----	----	20.73	16.10	42.65	31.06	79.18	56.00
59	----	----	22.31	16.97	46.59	33.25	87.06	60.37
60	----	----	24.41	18.11	51.84	36.09	97.56	66.06
61	----	----	27.03	19.25	58.40	38.93	110.68	71.75
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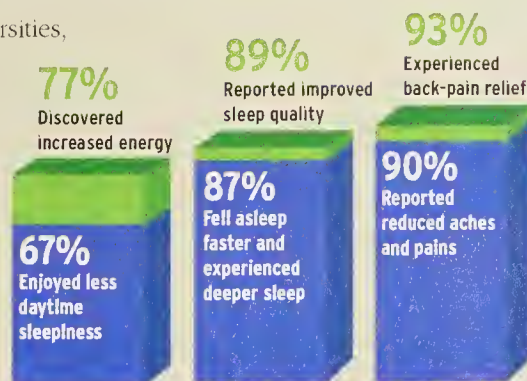


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A description of various clinical research studies are available by calling 1-800-831-1211.



A guide to today's wholesale power market

And how it affects your cooperative

Although electric utility deregulation has not come to the retail market in North Carolina, it came to the wholesale market nationwide in 1992. Wholesale electricity is the bulk power that generating companies make available to utilities and marketing entities for resale to their customers.

Congress restructured the wholesale electricity market with The Energy Policy Act of 1992, opening the industry to competition. As a result of the 1992 Act, there are more electric power suppliers in today's market. They include cogenerators, small power producers, independent power producers, merchant generators and power marketers. Power marketers traditionally do not own electrical generation, transmission or distribution assets. Instead, they buy and sell bulk power as a commodity.

This increasing complexity has created a need for new sources of expertise. Experts in the areas of risk management, generation fuel portfolio management and economic forecasting are becoming just as important to electric cooperatives and other utilities as engineers and line workers.

To address these new needs, North Carolina's electric cooperatives, through their power supply cooperative, North Carolina Electric Membership Corporation (NCEMC), have joined with generation and transmission cooperatives across the nation in the Alliance of Cooperative Energy Suppliers, known as ACES Power Marketing.

Chuck Terrill, CEO of the statewide power supply cooperative NCEMC, said, "Although the wholesale market has changed more in the past few years than at any other time in our history, the basic cooperative principles of joining forces to create market strength have never been more relevant, and enable the cooperatives to deliver the best possible service, prices and energy reliability to our members."



Here are some answers to commonly asked questions about the wholesale power market.

Do wholesale power prices affect my electric bill?

The weather is the biggest determinant of the amount of your power bill. If you've been using your electric heating system a lot because of cold weather, for example, your bill will increase. Also, the cost of wholesale electricity can influence your bill. Recently, a number of marketplace factors have caused an increase in the cost of wholesale power, which your co-op purchases through its power supply cooperative, NCEMC. Your not-for-profit cooperative may recover this cost in the form of a modest adjustment on your bill.

What are the marketplace factors that caused an increase in wholesale power costs?

On the wholesale level, electricity is a commodity much like wheat, natural gas and pork bellies. So it's influenced by market pressures such as supply, demand, weather and the price and availability of fuel and power generation facilities.

Where does my co-op's power come from?

In this state, 26 cooperatives purchase all of their power through their power supply cooperative, NCEMC. NCEMC aggregates the power needs of all 26 cooperatives to obtain the best possible prices for wholesale electricity.

If the wholesale marketplace is so uncertain, why doesn't the co-op just build its own power plant?

North Carolina's electric cooperatives, through NCEMC, own a significant part of a generation facility:

Catawba Nuclear Station in York, S.C. However, Catawba meets only a portion of the cooperatives' power needs. For the last several years, it has been more economical to purchase the remainder of our power requirements on the deregulated wholesale market. However, because market conditions do change, the cooperatives continually review future power needs, and balance these projected needs with economic projections to decide whether it makes more financial sense to buy or to build.

What is my co-op doing to ensure we have the lowest cost power possible?

It is your cooperative's mission to provide you safe and reliable electricity at the lowest possible cost. NCEMC aggregates the power needs of 26 electric cooperatives to obtain the best prices possible. Also, NCEMC has joined with six other cooperative power suppliers across the nation to form the Alliance for Cooperative Energy Suppliers, known as ACES Power Marketing. ACES helps provide the economies of scale needed to manage risks inherent in a competitive wholesale market, and uses the clout brought about by sheer volume and size to obtain the best possible energy prices for co-op consumers. And of course, your co-op continues to seek ways to operate more efficiently without sacrificing reliability and quality service.

What is ACES Power Marketing?

ACES is a group formed by generation and transmis-



sion cooperatives across the country to meet the challenges of the deregulated wholesale electricity marketplace. The members of ACES are: the North Carolina Electric Membership Corporation, Wabash Valley Power Association, East Kentucky Power Cooperative, Southern Illinois Power Cooperative, Golden Spread Electric Cooperative, Buckeye Power Inc. and Old Dominion Electric Cooperative. Additionally, ACES provides services to non-member customers.

Why was it necessary to form ACES?

ACES provides essential expertise in such fields as economic forecasting, fuel portfolio management and risk management, which are necessary in today's market where bulk power is bought and sold.

How is my local co-op involved in ACES?

Your cooperative is involved through its power supply cooperative, North Carolina Electric Membership Corporation.

Will ACES cause our electric bills to go up?

No. ACES exists to manage the challenges and risks of the wholesale power market and keep the price of electricity reasonable. ACES financial experts will develop a custom strategy for its energy resources to make sure that cooperatives can take advantage of wholesale market opportunities and reduce exposure to energy market spikes. Essentially, involvement in ACES means your co-op is in the position to seek the best possible prices for energy.

How much does it cost NCEMC and its member co-ops to be a part of ACES?

ACES member-owners pay a one-time equity payment upon joining and are assessed annual fees based on the number of megawatt sales through ACES.

Where are the ACES offices located?

ACES is headquartered in Indianapolis and has a regional trading center in Cary, N.C.

Is ACES a for-profit company?

ACES is a limited liability corporation owned by its member generation and transmission cooperatives (G&Ts), and operated under cooperative principles and business practices. The goal of ACES is to provide trading and risk management services at cost, not at a profit. Each member of ACES, such as NCEMC, will determine the risk and trading profile of its assets that ACES will operate under. Members share all profits and benefits equally.

Who makes up the ACES board?

Each ACES member gets two seats on the board and usually the chief executive officer and president or chairman serve. Representing North Carolina Electric Membership Corporation are President R.G. "Randy"

Brecheisen of Piedmont EMC and Charles "Chuck" Terrill, CEO and executive vice president of NCEMC.

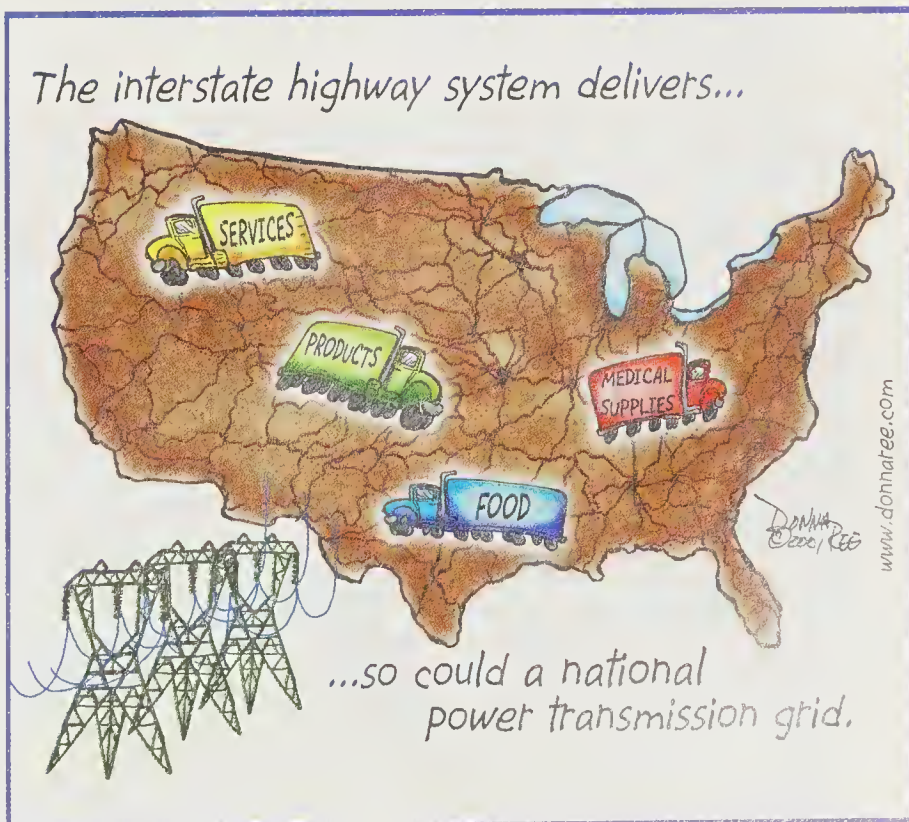
Did wholesale power prices affect California last summer?

California's power shortage last year can be attributed to three primary issues: lack of electricity supply, insufficient transmission lines and a lack of long-term contracts for wholesale power. California had not built a new electric generating plant for more than 10 years, while the state's demand for electricity increased three times more than predicted.

California also needs more transmission lines to transport electricity to the consumers. California utilities import up to 25 percent of their electricity and traditionally have bought power from neighboring states such as Arizona, Washington and Nevada. These states are fast-growing and their need for electricity has increased, reducing the amount available to sell to California. This problem was compounded when California required the state's utilities to sell some power plants, prohibited them from signing long-term contracts for electricity and required them to buy power from the California Power Exchange, which bought and sold power on a daily basis.

The main purpose of restructuring, or deregulation, is to lower prices, and it worked in California in 1998 and 1999. But just as market pressure can force prices to drop, market forces can also force prices higher, and in California's case, the wholesale electric power costs went much higher. Meanwhile, retail rates that consumers pay were frozen according to the state's deregulation plan, resulting in a precarious situation for electric utilities.

This guide was prepared by the Corporate Communications staff of the North Carolina Electric Membership Corporation in Raleigh.





Rural communities now have local dial-up Internet access

A major roadblock to rural business and community development has been removed since North Carolina's Rural Internet Access Authority announced that all state residents now have local telephone dial-up access to the Internet.

In the past, rural areas had access to the Internet, but many individuals had to pay long-distance charges to connect. Now, rural North Carolinians can go online simply by making a local telephone call.

As with other utilities, rural areas are often the last to be served with Internet service because of the high price of doing business. Rural Center President Billy Ray Hall and other authority members (including Curtis Wynn, who is CEO of Roanoke Electric Cooperative) spoke about local dial-up access before the legislature's joint select committee on information technology.

Individuals can locate Internet service providers (ISPs) serving their communities by visiting www.e-nc.org or by calling (866) NCRURAL (627-8725).



Touchstone Energy swimmers

Rutherford EMC recently sponsored the Touchstone Energy Blue Ridge Swim League Turkey Meet at Lenoir Rhyne College. The Catawba Valley Aquatics Club hosted 264 swimmers from Asheville, Morganton, Huntersville and Hickory.

What is a cooperative?

Part 4

Cooperatives worldwide function within the same principles. They are businesses that operate for the benefit of their members, instead of for financial profit. They abide by a common set of values and by seven principles. Each month through July, Carolina Country will describe the principles.

Principle No. 2:

Democratic Member Control:

Cooperatives are democratic organizations controlled by their members, who actively participate in setting their policies and making decisions. Men and women serving as elected representatives are accountable to the membership. In primary cooperatives, members have equal voting rights (one member, one vote) and cooperatives at other levels are organized in a democratic manner.

Light Lines

by DonnaRee



Pre-paid power is catching on

A handful of U.S. utilities, including the pioneering Brunswick EMC in Brunswick and Columbus counties, offer prepaid electric service. It is a service that has long been popular with electricity and gas customers in the United Kingdom.

A new report by the Cooperative Research Network shows about 30,000 North American customers prepay their electric service.

That compares to 9 percent of U.K. gas and 16 percent of electric customers who use prepaid service, totaling 6.9 million consumers. Prepaid utility service has existed in the United Kingdom since the early 1900s.

U.K. prepaid customers are highly satisfied with this service, according to a January 2001 report from Britain's Office of Gas and Electricity Markets. Three-quarters would not switch from prepaid service even if it were more costly than traditional service.

Brunswick EMC in 1992 tried out a few prepaid meters. "From that point it went wild," said Judy Gore, vice president of customer service.

Today, 5,000 of the co-op's 52,000 customers use the meters and the co-op installs 40 to 50 more each month. Eight out of 10 prepayment customers reported that they are "completely satisfied" or "very satisfied" with the arrangement, according to a 1999 survey. Brunswick charges \$6 more per month for a prepaid meter because of higher capital and maintenance costs.

In most systems, customers put money in by swiping an ATM-like card through a card reader installed in their homes or elsewhere. The unit deducts money from that balance as electricity is used. It also warns days in advance when customers are likely to run out of power.

Child care in North Carolina: A guide for working parents

As the need for quality child care increases, options are becoming more available, thanks to caring providers, local agencies and the state of North Carolina

By Renee Gannon

Finding a house, buying a car, choosing child care. Parents must spend more time on the last item when choosing the best options for the care of their child. Placing your child in the care of others is a difficult, personal decision many parents in North Carolina and across the nation must make for a variety of reasons, including economics. After all, you are entrusting the care of your most prized possession to someone else.

It's also a decision that cannot be taken lightly, no matter the reason for its need.

According to recent studies, more than 60 percent of U.S. children have two working parents or a single parent who works outside the home. In North Carolina, according to the N.C. Division of Child Development, 212,287 kids were in regulated child care. This number doesn't reflect those in unregulated care, or in the homes of friends, family and neighbors.

Quality and parental satisfaction are keys to successful child care. Like a book, you can't judge child care by its looks or name alone.

State of child care in N.C.

For working parents in North Carolina, the news is good concerning child care options. In the last decade, the state has made tremendous strides in improving and regulating the quality of child care.

Alice Thomas, program coordinator for the Harnett County Cooperative Extension Child Resource and Referral Agency, has seen a vast improvement. "A lot of the improvement in quality and resources should be credited to the state for its star-rated license system, and especially to former Governor Jim Hunt for his Smart Start initiatives," says Thomas.

The cost of care varies between urban and rural areas, and by type of care. But parents in both urban and rural settings have quality care options.

The rural areas have made a dramatic leap forward in providing quality care and information to parents. "In the rural areas, it's been a long time coming to have resources for parents and providers," says Thomas. "We want parents to get everything they need to find quality child care, and we are here for that provider to make sure that they offer quality care for every child in the county."

The state of North Carolina requires child care providers to obtain a license when certain conditions exist pertaining to the number of children being cared for.

Regulation is also required. The North Carolina Department of Health and Human Services is responsible for regulating child care, which is done through the Division of Child Development. Since 1995, the state requires criminal background checks and fingerprint checks for all persons working in regulated child care programs. These state requirements are intended to protect the

well-being of children while they are away from their parents.

Many care choices are available in North Carolina. The main options include family child care homes, child care centers and church-based care. These options usually offer both full-time and part-time care.

Family Child Care Home: This refers to child care at a provider's home. A family child care home must be licensed to care for more than two preschool-age children, but no more than five. It includes the provider's own preschoolers.

Child Care Center: A licensed program that cares for more than five preschool-age children for more than four hours a day. Most centers also provide a structured preschool program.

Church-based Care: Religious-sponsored programs are exempt from some of the state's regulations concerning staff education, but must meet state regulations pertaining to sanitation, fire, health, and some of the child development rules and regulations. Churches can voluntarily apply for the star-rated license program, but must meet all the state's requirements to do so. Otherwise, the church must obtain a GS-110 notice of compliance, a permit to operate a child care business that is given strictly to churches.

(continued on next page)



Other options that may or may not be state regulated include in-home child care and mother's morning out programs.

State requirements

To be licensed in North Carolina, child care providers must meet a minimum set of requirements. They are also urged to go a few steps further to obtain a higher "star rating" from the state that further shows their efforts in providing quality care.

"Child care home" providers must have training in child development and CPR each year, as well as first aid training every three years. All homes must meet basic health and safety standards, maintain verification of children's immunization and health status, provide age-appropriate toys and activities, as well as nutritious meals and snacks for the children in care.

The minimum requirements for "centers" include those necessary for home care. Lead teachers must hold at least a North Carolina Early Childhood Credential or its equivalent. The program's administrator must have least a North Carolina Early Childhood Administration Credential or its equivalent. And all staff must have training in child development each year. Centers must also follow state-required ratios of staff per number of children, as well as proper space, equipment, health and safety requirements.

Consultants from the Division of Child Development visit "centers" and "homes" on a regular basis to verify they are following the law.

In both types of care, corporal punishment (spanking, slapping or other physical discipline) is prohibited. Each provider must have a written policy on discipline, must discuss it with parents and give parents a copy when a child is enrolled. Policy changes must also be shared with parents in writing before becoming effective.

Parents also have rights to enter a care provider's "home" or "center" at any time while their child is present, to know how their child will be disciplined, and to see the provider's license.

Star-rated system

To help parents understand the requirements child care providers must meet, North Carolina implemented a star-rated system to explain what a provider offers.

Before the state implemented the star-rated system in September 2000, parents were confused on how an A license differed from an AA license, and what each actually meant. Now, parents can check the number of stars a provider has, from one to five, and as with a movie or restaurant, the more stars, the more offered.

Family child care "homes" and child care "centers" must receive at least one star, which means the provider meets the state's minimum requirements. Church-based programs are exempt from the star rating, but can voluntarily apply, which many are doing.

The providers then must voluntarily apply for extra stars. Many one-star providers haven't applied, even though they may meet extra requirements.

"It's voluntary for the provider to apply for greater than one star," says Alice Thomas. "In Harnett County, this is our big push right now, to encourage and help all the programs apply for greater than one star. Many of them are greater than one star, so why would you choose to be a one if you could be a three or more."

Resource and referral services are also educating parents about the star rating. This is to both the parents' and providers' advantage: when providers find out parents are more knowledgeable about the system and that they are looking for more than one star, then the providers realize applying for more stars is to their benefit.

Providers obtain extra stars by meeting higher standards in

three areas: by having a higher quality environment for children, having staff with more early child education and experience, and for having a high rate of compliance with child care regulations.

A parent's obligation in choosing quality care doesn't stop with finding out the number of stars a provider has. They must also research and investigate their options before placing their child with a provider.

A parent's job is to investigate

The state of North Carolina does its part in helping programs improve quality of care, but the parents also play an important role – choosing the right care situation for their children.

When a parent calls resource and referral services such as the one in Harnett County, the agency must find out a few things from the parent first, before offering a list of options.

"We ask the parents a lot of questions," says Alice Thomas at the Harnett County agency. "We need information so we will know where they are coming from and what they are looking for, such as part-time or full-time care, the child's age, shift work, and where they live and work."

Child care subsidies, such as those available from Smart Start and other financial aid programs, are also discussed. Child care is expensive. "It's tough if you have to pay child care every month and you don't make that much money," says Thomas. "We'd like to help families so they have more money to put more groceries on the table."

Parents are then given what to look for in quality care, along with a list of providers that may meet their needs. The parents must take it from there.

Parents are urged to visit providers as many times as possible at different times of the day to observe the care children are given and to ask the provider questions.

"There are things you need to look for. Just because the state has licensed a program, doesn't necessarily mean it will fit your needs," says Thomas.

Thomas suggests parents look at the program as if they were the child. "Would you like it at that center or home? Are the people happy, are they on the child's eye level, are they down working with the children, are the children laughing and smiling?"

Parents should also note if the facility offers a safe, clean and spacious indoor and outdoor environment.

"We tell parents that safety and health are two very important key issues. Another vital issue is how that adult interacts with the children," says Thomas. "Be sure to ask the facility about the education and experience of the teachers. Higher education and low staff turnover are indications of quality."

Resources list

Information on quality child care can be found on both the state and local levels. The N.C. Division of Child Development has an informative Web site at www.ncchildcare.net, or call toll-free (in-state only) at 1-800-859-0829.

Additional information and educational resources are also available through local N.C. Cooperative Visit www.ces.ncsu.edu/counties for locations.

While not all 100 N.C. counties have child resource and referral agencies, many counties share services. The following pages contain a list of the child care resource and referral services available in the state and their phone numbers.

All photos show Salem United Methodist Church child care center in Cumberland County. © 2002 by Todd Gaul. www.photophile.com

North Carolina

CHILD CARE RESOURCE & REFERRAL AGENCIES

Statewide

N.C. Child Care Resource & Referral Network
(919)933-5090; (919)933-0450

Alamance

CCR&R of Alamance
(336)438-2020; (336)438-2010

Alexander

Alexander County CCR&R
(828)632-3799; (828)632-6411

Alleghany

Child Care Resources of Alleghany
(336)372-9675; (336)372-4306

Anson

Child Care Pathways
(704)694-4036; (704)694-4010

Ashe

Ashe County CCR&R
(336)982-8870; (336)982-8860

Avery

Child Care Choices (Avery Co. Partnership for Children)
(828)733-2899; (828)733-9122

Beaufort

Beaufort County CCR&R
(252)975-4647; (252)975-4722

Bertie

CCR&R of Bertie County
(252)794-3438; (252)794-2831

Bladen

Southeastern CCR&R
(919)642-8189 or
(800)653-5212; (910)642-7566

Brunswick

CCR&R of Brunswick County
(910)755-3362 or
(877)422-7710; (910)755-3376

Buncombe

Buncombe County Child Care Services
(828)255-5725; (828)255-5767

Burke

Child Care Connections of Burke County, Inc.
(828)439-2328; (828)439-2333

Cabarrus

Child Care Resources Inc. (satellite)
(704)786-1023; (704)786-1034

Caldwell

Choices in Child Care
(828)757-8605; (828)757-8633

Camden

Albemarle CCR&R
(252)333-3205; (252)333-1201

Carteret

Carteret County CCR&R
(252)727-0445; (252)727-0460

Caswell

Caswell County CCR&R
(336)694-4158; (336)694-5930

Catawba

The Children's Resource Center
(828)328-8228; (828)328-4551

Chatham

Child Care Networks
(919)542-6644; (919)542-0902

Cherokee

Southwestern CCR&R
828/586-5561 or
(800)662-4158; (828)586-4039

Chowan

Albemarle CCR&R
(252)333-3205; (252)333-1201

Clay

Southwestern CCR&R
(828)586-5561 or
(800)662-4158; (828)586-4039

Cleveland

Child Care Connections
(704)482-5308; (704)484-2524

Columbus

Southeastern CCR&R
(910)642-8189 or
(800)653-5212; (910)642-7566

Craven

CCR&R of Craven-Pamlico Counties
(252)672-5921; (252)672-5922

Cumberland

Child Care Solutions
(910)860-2277; (910)860-2217

Currituck

Albemarle CCR&R
(252)333-3205; (252)333-1201

Dare

Children & Youth Partnership for Dare County
(252)441-4737; (252)441-3580

Davidson

Child Care Connection
(336)249-0216; (336)249-6687

Duplin

Duplin County Partnership for Children CCR&R
(910)296-2000; (910)296-1497

Durham

Child Care Services
(919)403-6950; (919)403-6959

Edgecombe

Down East Partnership for Children - CCR&R
(252)985-4300; (252)985-4319

Forsyth Work/

Family Resource Ctr.
(336)761-5100; (336)761-5107

Franklin

CCR&R of Franklin, Granville, Vance
(252)433-9110; (252)433-9230

Gaston

Child Care Information
(704)922-0199; (704)922-3188

Gates

Albemarle CCR&R
(252)333-3205; (252)333-1201

Graham

Southwestern CCR&R
(828)586-5561 or
(800)662-4158; (828)586-4039

Granville

CCR&R of Franklin, Granville, Vance
(252)433-9110; (252)433-9230

Greene

Lenoir-Green CCR&R
(252)747-3331; (252)526-5153

Guilford

Child Care Information Program of United Child Development Services, Inc
(910)378-7702; (910)378-7708

Halifax

Halifax County CCR&R Services
(252)535-4715; (252)537-9732

Harnett

Harnett County CCR&R
(910)893-7535; (910)893-7539

Haywood

Southwestern CCR&R
(828)586-5561 or
(800)662-4158; (828)586-4039

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North Carolina

CHILD CARE RESOURCE & REFERRAL AGENCIES

Henderson

CCR&R of Henderson County
(828)698-0674; (828)698-5532

Hertford

Hertford Co. Partnership for
Children - CCR&R
(252)398-4124; (252)398-3965

Hoke

Child Care Connections
(Moore satellite)
(910)904-6688; (910)904-7140

Iredell

Child Care Solutions of Iredell
County
(704)878-9980; (704)878-9961

Jackson

Southwestern CCR&R
(828)586-5561 or (800)662-
4158; (828)586-4039

Johnston

CCR&R of Johnston County
(919)202-0002; (919)202-0902

Jones

Carteret County CCR&R
(252)727-0445; (252)727-0460

Lee

Brick City CCR&R
(919)776-7157; (919)776-5540

Lenoir

Lenoir-Green CCR&R
(252)526-5000; (252)526-5153

Lincoln

Child Care Information
(704)736-9991; (704)922-3188

Macon

Southwestern CCR&R
(828)586-5561 or (800)662-
4158; (828)586-4039

Madison

Madison County CCR&R
(828)649-3684; (828)649-9373

Martin

ChildLinks
(252)758-8885; (252)758-2627

McDowell

Children's Services Network
(828)652-4249; (828)652-1014

Mecklenburg

Child Care Resources Inc.
(704)376-6697; (704)376-7865

Mitchell

Mitchell/Yancey Counties
CCR&R
(828)682-0717; (828)682-0717

Montgomery

Child Care Central
(910)576-2363; (910)576-2562

Moore

Child Care Connections of
Moore County
(910)944-2443; (910)944-3081

Nash

Down East Partnership for
Children - CCR&R
(252)985-4300; (252)985-4319

New Hanover

Child Advocacy Commission,
CCR&R
(910)791-6270; (910)791-2441

Northampton

Northampton CCR&R
(252)534-1656; (252)534-1568

Onslow

Onslow County Partnership
for Children
(910)938-0336; (910)938-3941

Orange

Child Care Services
Association
(919)967-3272; (919)967-7683

Pamlico

CCR&R of Craven-Pamlico
Counties
(252)672-5921; (252)672-5922

Pasquotank

Albemarle CCR&R
(252)333-3205; (252)333-1201

Pender

Pender County Partnership for
Children
(910)259-5263; (910)259-9728

Perquimans

Albemarle CCR&R
(252)333-3205; (252)333-1201

Person

Person Co. Partnership for
Children - CCR&R
(336)599-1240; (336)599-3999

Pitt

ChildLinks
(252)758-8885; (252)758-2627

Polk

Family Resources, Inc. -
CCR&R of Rutherford County
(828)286-3411; (828)286-3417

Richmond

Richmond County Partnership
for Children
(910)997-3773; (910)997-5432

Robeson

Child Care Directions (satellite
office)
(910)671-8335; (910)671-8332

Rockingham

Rockingham County
Partnership for Children
(336)342-9676; (336)342-9962

Rutherford

Family Resources
(828)286-3411; (828)286-3417
or (828)286-8413

Sampson

Child Care Choices of
Sampson County
(910)592-9399; (910)592-9304

Scotland

Child Care Directions
(910)276-3367; (910)277-7260

Stanly

Stanly County Partnership for
Children - CCR&R
(704)982-0286; (704)983-8981

Stokes

Stokes CCR&R
(336)591-4385; (336)591-4114

Surry

Surry Co. Early Childhood
Partnership
(336)786-1880; (336)786-1879

Swain

Southwestern CCR&R
(828)586-5561 or (800)662-
4158; (828)586-4039

Transylvania

Transylvania County CCR&R
(828)884-3116; (828)884-3270

Union

Child Care Resources Inc.
(704)238-8800; (704)238-8800

Vance

CCR&R of Franklin,
Granville, Vance
(252)433-9110; (252)433-9230

Wake

CCR&R of Wake County
(919)832-7175; (919)832-7903

Warren

Halifax-Warren CCR&R
(252)535-4715; (252)537-9732

Washington

Washington County Child
Advocacy Council
(252)793-1470; (252)793-1526

Watauga

Children's Council of CCR&R
(828)262-5424; (828)262-5422

Wayne

Wayne CCR&R
(919)735-6402; (919)735-6403

Wilkes

Wilkes CCR&R
(336)838-0977; (336)838-0782

Wilson

Wilson County Partnership for
Children, Inc.
(252)206-4106; (252)206-4245

Yadkin

Yadkin County Partnership for
Children
(336)679-7922; (336)679-6692

Yancey

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NOW what do we do?

Advice for parents of young children

*W*hen my daughter Erin was 2 years old, her child care teacher handed me a poem that I have kept on my refrigerator ever since. Its words of wisdom still ring true today, even though my daughter is now 5 and in kindergarten. The poem is called "The Toddler's Creed":

*If I want it, it's mine
If I give it to you and change my mind, it's mine
If I take it away from you, it's mine
If I had it a little while ago, it's mine
If it's mine it will never belong to anybody else
No matter what
If we are building something together,
All the pieces are mine
If it looks just like mine, it's mine.*

The teacher passed the poem on to me after I spilled out my frustrations in dealing with a 2-year-old. I pass these words of wisdom on to you, in the hopes that in your times of frustration, you will read the poem, smile a little, even chuckle a bit, and remember that yes, your child does rule your world.

On the following pages are more words of wisdom for parents. We received nearly 200 submissions to this topic, showing us that good advice is actually easy to come by. More of the entries will be posted on our Web site at www.carolinacountry.com. Look on page 19 for the "Nothing Could Be Finer" themes of 2002.

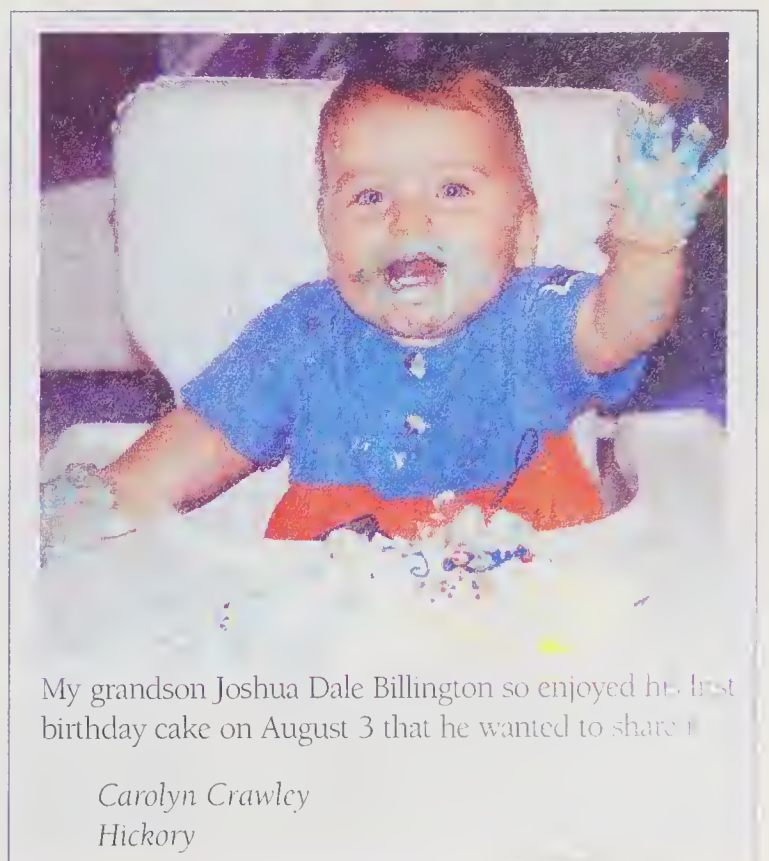
—Renee Gannon

See their world

If you bring a child into this world, take the time to let him show it to you. You will be amazed at the joy of seeing the world through your little one's eyes. It may be something as simple as a bug that he's found, but remember, it may be the first bug he has ever seen. Just stop whatever you're doing, and let him show it to you.

I find myself still doing this with my grown son. Even as an adult, he still enjoys showing me his world. I have watched many beautiful sunsets, or sat by peaceful mountain streams, when I really needed to be doing something else. I am delighted that we had those times together. My son will be a new father soon and is so excited about seeing his world all over again, this time through his child's eyes.

Renee G. Large
Pfafftown
Blue Ridge EMC



My grandson Joshua Dale Billington so enjoyed his first birthday cake on August 3 that he wanted to share it.

Carolyn Crawley
Hickory



Christa, Quinn and Matthew Pesek.

Enjoy them

Whenever I see parents with their young children, I think to myself: enjoy them.

We're all familiar with the phrase "your children will be grown before you know it." Believe it!

Whenever I hear parents talk about all the "fun" things they used to do before they had children, my response to them is: This is your life, here and now. Enjoy what God has given to you today. Learn to watch your children and interact with them in a positive manner. Spend time with them playing games, reading to them, or simply playing. This phase in your life and in theirs will last just a very short time (though some days will seem longer than others). So please, make the most of life as it is today with your children.

Learn to laugh with your children and delight over the things that delight them. And please don't fret over the small stuff. If your child spills his/her milk, learn to say "Oopsy-daisy, the cows are coming home." Then after the spill is cleaned, tell him/her about placing the cup more carefully.

But most importantly, and on a daily basis, say, "I love you."

Crystal Pesek
South Mills
Albemarle EMC

Follow your intuition

As a new parent, you'll discover the confusion of "advice overload." Everyone has something to offer, and every article you read seems aimed at you. Listen, sort it out, learn from some of it — and discard most what is offered!

The best thing you can do is to use your common sense and parental intuition. No one knows your child like you do, and your gut feelings are most often correct. If you think something's the matter with your child but 'experts' disagree — get as many expert opinions as necessary to satisfy that gnawing suspicion within you.

Do all that you can to ensure your child will grow up with both parents — take care of your health and of your spousal relationship. Evaluate your lifestyle — your worst habits are the ones your child will pick up! Make yourself an example of the good person you want him to be, and you'll both benefit.

Remember what childhood was like — be empathetic and supportive. Don't ever give up on your child, no matter what happens. Rest assured his adolescence will be trying, but nothing is so rewarding as seeing a responsible adult emerge on the other side of those teen years.

Diane LaBonte
Energy United
Huntersville



This is my daughter Sarah and her pet chicken, Ruby, in the summer of 2000. They shared time and snacks together. Ruby laid one egg and it was Sarah's job to collect that egg. Sometimes she made it to the house with the egg, and sometimes she'd hand you a gooey mess.

Angie Millner
Morganton
Rutherford EMC

Develop a reader

I read to both of my sons from the day we left the hospital. I doubt that they had any interest in the pros and cons of breast-feeding, but they certainly responded to Mom's voice. When they were older, we read books they chose. During their school years, we concentrated on the text lessons, as well as newspapers and popular novels. Reading is the fundamental skill that insures success in all areas of life. Give that child your time, your lap, and the sound of your voice. Give a love of reading.

Gail Medlin
Benson
Carteret-Craven Electric Cooperative



Will and Alex Church are helping their Grandpa.

Lois Weaver
Warrensville
Blue Ridge EMC

Realize the miracle

I'm probably the last person in the world who should be giving advice to young parents. I've only been a new parent for a few weeks now, and I realize that I have so much to learn myself.

My son, Jacob, was born 10 weeks early, and therefore is still in the Neonatal Intensive Care Unit (NICU) at Women's Hospital in Greensboro. My wife, Glenna, spent nine long weeks in the same hospital, on total bed rest and with her feet elevated to keep her water from breaking, trying her best to keep from delivering the baby too early. Even with all of the modern technology that the medical profession has to offer — and they truly offer a lot — they still could not prevent her from going into labor and delivering the baby early. The good news is that Jacob, who weighed 3 pounds and 11½ ounces at birth, has been breathing on his own since he was born and continues to progress beautifully (that's modern technology at work).

My advice to young parents would be never to take having a healthy baby for granted. When you think about all of the things that could go wrong during a pregnancy, you realize what a miracle it truly is to have a healthy baby. We feel so blessed that God chose us to participate in this miracle. We certainly would not have chosen these circumstances, but it has allowed us to draw closer to Him and to appreciate this new blessing in our lives even more.

Darrell Kidd
Randleman
Randolph EMC

Resolve your childhood hurts

Resolve any hurts, resentments or fears leftover from your childhood, so in dealing with your own children, your vision will be clear.

Kathy Brantner
Havelock
Carteret-Craven Electric Cooperative



My son is so curious about everything. I caught him on a summer afternoon at his grandparents' house trying to get the water out of this mud puddle.

LeAnn Collett
Lexington
EnergyUnited

Send us your best. Earn \$50.

Here are the themes in our "Nothing Could Be Finer" series. Send us your stories and pictures. You don't have to be the best writer. Just tell it from your heart.

April 2002

"Best North Carolina Vacation I Ever Had."
Where, why and send pictures.
Deadline: Feb. 15

May 2002

"Why I Like Living in the Country."
Tell us where and what's good about it.
Deadline: March 15

June 2002

"The Funniest Story I Ever Heard"
True or not so true.
Deadline: April 15

July 2002

"How to Survive a Storm."
Your advice and memories about storms.
Deadline: May 15

August 2002

"My Funniest Pet Story."
Send pictures, too.
Deadline: June 15

September 2002

"My Favorite Photo."
Our annual photo gallery.
Deadline: July 15

October 2002

"How I Learned to Drive."
How good was the teacher, really?
Deadline: August 15

November 2002

"The Dumbest Thing I Ever Did."
And the lesson you learned afterwards.
Deadline: Sept. 15

December 2002

"Advice for Getting Older."
How can we age gracefully?
Deadline: Oct. 15

The Rules

1. Approximately 200 words or less.
2. Only one entry per household per month.
3. Photos are welcome. Digital photos must be 300 dpi and actual size.
4. E-mail or typed, if possible. Otherwise, make it legible.
5. Include your name, electric co-op, mailing address and phone number.
6. If you want your entry returned, please include a self-addressed, stamped envelope. (We will not return others.)
7. We pay \$50 for each submission published.
8. We will post on our Web site more entries than we publish, but can't pay for those submissions. (Let us know if you don't agree to this.)
9. Send to Nothing Finer, Carolina Country, 3400 Sumner Blvd., Raleigh, NC 27616. Or by e-mail: carolina.country@ncemcs.com. Or through the Web site: www.carolinacountry.com

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NEW MOTORIZED MODEL SHOWN ABOVE!

Lots of **love** lived in this old house

By Mrs. Julian Humphrey



*M*y husband Julian tells me not to look back, but to look ahead. I'm sorry, but I have memories of this old house I want to keep.

This was Julian's and my first home. He was a young man then, and I was still a teenager, 17. We had an 8-month-old son Ray. We raised our family here. The day we moved, I kissed that door that sheltered us from so many a storm good-bye. My son Steven was 7 then. He was crying not to move.

We didn't have a lot, just love and family. And I believe my husband was more healthy than when we started moving around. This old house is well over 100 years old. It sheltered us 17 years. I will never outgrow it.

In different places the house would freeze you to death when it got colder and sweat you to death when hotter.

We farmed for a living. We raised corn, tobacco and tried a few soybeans. While putting in tobacco in the afternoon when lunch had done ran out, we ran to our garden cross the road and got us a red juicy tomato. It was delicious. And I made money for Christmas on an old pecan tree. It sure helped out. We used pine trees growing on the ditch for Christmas trees.

We had a hill we could slide in the ditch playing, and a ditch with clean running water. On a hot afternoon it felt so good to our feet, like a foot therapy.

We even had to tote groceries from the yard next door after grocery shopping because driving especially we'd slip and slide and get stuck after a rain or snow. We fished behind the house across the road in the woods. My son ran up on some snakes one time. He also found some worms in a jar.

We played ball. And I could roll hundreds of yards in the grass and ground. We kept our chickens in fences. We had dogs. I don't remember how many. But folks would come through and throw out so many dogs. I was a'feared for my children's safety. I had to call the dog man to come get some of them. I couldn't today, because I love all animals and the kids are grown up. We still own four dogs and lots of cats and two birds. When my grandchildren come by, Sassy Lou our bull dog just gotta kiss them young'uns up, some coming in and going back. She is special. Her mama left her for dead, but we gave her mouth-to-mouth and rubbed her to get her warmed up. My son bought her special milk and carried her to the vet. It cost over \$600. What's love cost? It's priceless.

P.S. We have been with Pitt & Greene EMC for 37 years. My husband, me and my daddy before he passed away. He was Elbert Lee Penny. I really loved my daddy a lot.

Mrs. Julian Humphrey is a member of Pitt & Greene EMC and lives in Snow Hill.

Western North Carolina opens the nation's first tobacco “marketing center”

A return to the traditional tobacco warehouse auction works well for growers and buyers

Don't count the tobacco auction system out yet. It may come back strong if the new concept of a marketing center established in western North Carolina catches on with growers and tobacco buyers.

Last November, some 2,500 North Carolina burley tobacco growers had a place to auction their leaf at a new marketing center in Asheville. Auctions opened at Dixie Big Burley Warehouse and Planters Tobacco Warehouse, thanks to a \$2 million grant that the Phase I Tobacco Trust Fund Commission awarded to the North Carolina Rural Economic Development Center.

“Without this marketing center, it's quite likely that these two warehouses would have closed,” said Larry Wooten, president of the North Carolina Farm Bureau. “Companies elected not to put any receiving stations in western North Carolina. What it would have meant is that all the burley tobacco grown in North Carolina quite likely would have been trucked out of North Carolina and sold elsewhere.”

Market forces in 2000 allowed many tobacco companies to contract directly with growers rather than buy at the traditional warehouse auctions. That left many farmers with no alter-

native to market their crops.

“It was more than an agricultural issue,” said Wooten. “It was an economic development issue for western North Carolina. We feel very strongly that our farmers deserve an alternative to contracting.”

“This marketing center grant gives rural communities a fighting chance,” said Billy Ray Hall, president of the Rural Center. “Without a viable marketplace, farmers will suffer. Common sense tells us, the communities in which they live and spend will feel the same pinch in the form of lost jobs and business.”

The marketing center is the first of its kind in the nation. In addition to allowing the auction, the Rural Center's project also pays warehouse, grading and assessment fees, and other marketing fees typically paid by growers. A hauling fee of 3 cents per pound will be paid for tobacco grown in the counties of Allegheny, Ashe, Avery, Cherokee, Clay, Graham and Watauga.



Tobacco sales were brisk on opening day in November at Planters Tobacco Warehouse in Asheville.

“We will put a lot of money back in their pockets, and the companies like it, too,” said Warren Anders, owner of Planters Tobacco Warehouse. With 10.5 million pounds of tobacco designated for the Asheville marketing center, he said, buyers won't have to spend time and money driving to several different markets to purchase what they want.

On opening day, Nov. 13, in Planters Warehouse, Madison County grower Carroll Askew was satisfied with his day's average of \$1.78 per pound on 2,700 pounds of his crop. He supports the new marketing center

Photos by Rocky Womack



Tobacco buyers competitively bid on bales as the auctioneer followed the purchasers' intentions.



USDA grader Johnny Proffitt tests each bale for moisture content.

concept. "In the short term, I'm not for contracted tobacco. [Under contracting], we're going to put too many of our older folks out of tobacco who have smaller crops. I want it to stay the old-time way."

The marketing center will share some of the features of the old warehouse system with some features of the new contract receiving stations, says Chris Beacham, senior research director at the Rural Center. "It will bring integrity to the system. Both the buyer and the seller will know they're getting a fair shake. The farmers will get fair competition for their product."

Historically, North Carolina farmers have harvested between 12 and 13 million pounds of burley tobacco each year. This year, farmers are expecting a statewide harvest was roughly 11 million pounds.

Agricultural officials estimate that there are about 2,500 burley tobacco farms in 17 western North Carolina counties, including Alleghany, Ashe, Avery, Buncombe, Cherokee, Clay, Graham, Haywood, Henderson, Jackson, Macon, Madison, Mitchell, Swain, Transylvania, Watauga and Yancey.

In the future, the Tobacco Trust Fund may not fund the marketing center project as much as it has in the

beginning, so Beacham says the center will need to become self-sustaining.

If the center can stand on its own and become successful, the new marketing concept will "put the auction system back where it ought to be," says Anders at the Planters warehouse. "I really think this is the way burley is going to go."

Other tobacco-producing states, such as Tennessee and Kentucky, will

be watching the Rural Center's pilot program closely, said Beacham, to see if similar programs could be a viable marketing alternative for their own burley tobacco farmers. The Rural Center's Agricultural Advancement Consortium will oversee the marketing center pilot program and will make periodic reports on the program's progress to the Trust Fund Commission.

The North Carolina Rural Center, based in Raleigh, is a nonprofit organization founded in 1987 to preserve the economic integrity of rural North Carolina. For more information, contact the Rural Center at 4021 Carya Drive, Raleigh, NC 27610.

Phone: (919) 250-4314. E-mail: info@ncruralcenter.org. Web site: www.ncruralcenter.org.

This story was originally reported by Rocky Womack of The Burley Tobacco Farmer. Burley tobacco farmers may receive the magazine free. Visit www.tobaccofarmer.com or contact the publisher at The Burley Tobacco Farmer, 3000 Highwoods Blvd., Suite 300, Raleigh, NC 27604. Subscriptions are available for \$15 per year to non-growers.

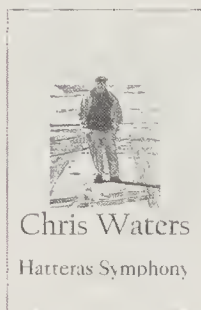
Ray Owen (forefront), co-owner of Dixie Big Burley Warehouse in Asheville, glances at the marketing ticket for the grader's grade. In the background, buyers bid on the bales they hope to purchase.



Hatteras poetry by Chris Waters

The recently published "Hatteras Symphony" by Chris Waters contains more than two dozen poems based on his time spent on the Outer Banks. Topics range widely from Wonder Bread and eclipses to powerful hurricanes and mortality.

A Wilmington native, Waters made his first camping trip to the dunes of Cape Point in 1957, when it was still legal to camp there.



"Then, it was far less crowded, less restricted. You camped mostly where you wanted: a lee of any small dune was a favorite site," wrote Waters.

In addition to this newest collection, Waters has authored three books on African literature and one on Paul Claudel.

Order "Hatteras Symphony" at www.amazon.com for \$9. You can also contact publisher Robert Bixby at rbixby@aol.com or

write to him at 3413 Wilshire Drive, Greensboro, NC 27408.

"Down Home" stories by Walter Hinshaw

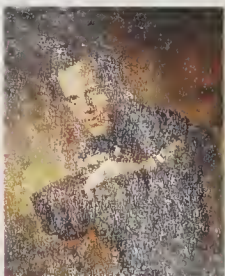
Burlington native Walter Hinshaw serves up his own versions of "Wit and Wisdom" with a series of farm-related stories, available on tape or CD. Hinshaw's newest compilation features stories such as "Garden woes," "School bus, covered bridge and dead hog," and as a bonus, two musical numbers by his wife Marlys and family friend Ben Seymour. Tapes cost \$9.95 while CDs are \$14.95.

A man of diverse talents, Hinshaw also sells "Dumpster Dolls," small dolls recycled from discarded rope scraps. The dolls' bodies are twisted into different-colored knots and the heads sport plastic eyes, and features fashioned from still more rope. To date, Hinshaw has made more than 7,000 Dumpster Dolls. The dolls cost \$3.95.

To order, visit home.earthlink.net/~walterhinshaw and download a printable form. Or, indicate your desired product (tape or CD, volume 1 or 2, and/or a dumpster doll), include a check or money order, your shipping address, and send it to: Walter Hinshaw, 3308 Alamance Road, Burlington, NC 27215. There is no charge for shipping.

Soulful folk music by guitarist David Wilcox

The latest album, "What You Whispered," from David Wilcox features 12 original folk compositions. With tones reminiscent of James Brown and a harp-like guitar sound refined while attending



Warren Wilson College in Asheville, David creates music that "dares people to feel alive."

"I want to feel like I'm singing the soundtrack to your life," David said in an interview on mp3.com. "For me, music is a way to stir up emotion and wake up hearts. Music is sacred ground for me."

"What You Whispered" is David's seventh release, after nearly 15 years of recording. The CD costs \$15.98. All of David's CDs, songbooks, and videos can be purchased online at <http://davidwilcox.com/davidwilcox.html> or by calling (800) 492-3079. The Web site also features tour dates, sample .mp3 tracks from his CDs, and a mailing list to receive e-mails concerning tours and new releases.

Jack Pentes opens art gallery in Charlotte

Artist Jack Pentes celebrated his 70th birthday in 2001 by opening an art gallery in Charlotte with his wife, Ruth. The Pentes



Artworks Gallery showcases Jack's paintings and Ruth's photography while providing local artists with a working space and exposure to a wider audience.

"We wished to support the Southern and Charlotte art community...and as artists ourselves, we bring an instinctive sensitivity to artists and their needs," said Jack.

Jack's history includes a wide variety of artistic exploits. A few highlights:

- In the 1950s and 60s, he worked as "BoBo the clown" on WBTV.
- In the 1970s, he designed the "Land of Oz" theme park in Beech Mountain.
- Jack was the first artist commissioned by The Queens Table in the 1980s to produce art for uptown Charlotte. The resulting four-ton design, "The Wind Sculptures" is still on display at West Trade Street, across from the federal courthouse.
- He is the designer internationally known and credited with creating "soft play" children's playground designs in the 1990s. These colorful and functional works of art can still be seen at McDonald's and Chuck E. Cheese restaurants all over the world.

Pentes Artworks is open Tuesday-Friday, 12-6 p.m., at 1346 Hill Road in Charlotte. Call (704) 556-9897 for more information or to make an appointment. You can also visit www.pentesartworks.com.

Warm up with the Southern Spring Show

Banish the chill from the air with a trip to the Charlotte Merchandise Mart for the 42nd annual Southern Spring Show, themed "Carolina Spring." Trade winter grays for greens thanks to more than a dozen gardens themed for the mountain, heartland and coastal regions of the two states. The attractive garden layouts include a replica of the Pisgah covered bridge, one of only two covered bridges still standing in North Carolina, and a rural country scene complete with barn, tractor and animals.



In addition:

- Gather new ideas and the latest techniques from designer rooms
- Get questions answered by the green thumb experts
- Find a large variety of home and garden accessories, plus plants, tools and power equipment from more than 500 exhibitors
- Peruse one-of-a-kind art and crafts

Show hours are: Saturday and Tuesday through Friday, 10 a.m. to 9 p.m.; Sunday and Monday, 10 a.m. to 6 p.m. Adult admission is \$9; \$8 after 5 p.m. on weekdays; \$7.50 prior to Feb. 23 online at www.southernspringshow.com. Children 12 and under are free with an adult. For more information, call (800) 849-0248 or visit www.southernspringshow.com.

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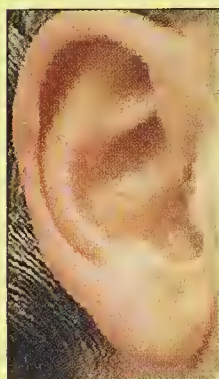


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Purple Martins – *America's Most Wanted Bird*

By Sandra Miller

You can't ride far through rural North Carolina without spotting a set of gourds or birdhouses erected to accommodate the most-sought-after bird in the United States: the purple martin. Some bird watchers put their architectural skills to work creating several sets of condominiums, while others string a convoy of painted white gourds between two trees. Although the former may be more eye pleasing to humans, these South American emigrants seem more attracted to location than design.

Each year thousands of the dark purple swallows migrate from Brazil and other points in South America to the United States and Canada, with the greatest number nesting in the southeastern United States. North Carolina's purple martin enthusiasts begin watching the sky in late February for the "scout bird." The first sighting can be either a male or female from the previous year's colony. The scout may circle the housing for a while before unpacking his bags, but his arrival usually means that there are more birds to come.

After the purple martins arrive from South America, they mate and begin building their nests. To a novice, the birds may appear to be fighting when they are actually mating in the air.

In some species of birds, both the male and female incubate the eggs, but only the female martin develops a brood patch for the 16-day incubation period. If something happens to the female, the male has to abandon the eggs and find a new mate. The female can be distinguished from the male by her grayish-colored breast (also visible in immature males).

Because they eat only flying insects, weather conditions are influential in the birds' survival. Full-grown birds weigh

about 55 grams and will lose around 5 grams for each day they cannot eat. If they lose down to 35 grams, they lose pectoral muscles and cannot fly and will die. They consume grit (pebbles, glass, eggshells) for calcium, which "landlords" can help provide. The calcium helps grind up the hard exoskeletons of the insects they eat.

Predators are a continuing problem, especially after the baby birds hatch. The Purple Martin Conservation Association (PMCA) suggests deterring snakes and raccoons, which readily climb both wood and metal poles to eat martins, by weekly checks of the housing or with a pole guard made of stovepipe or PVC pipe. Curtis Bowen from Forsyth County sets a life-like mannequin on his deck each year to dissuade hawks and owls. Jerry Miller from Yadkin County, a purple-martin veteran of 19 years, uses a solar predator light with an electric eye that automatically begins flashing at sundown. The light dilates the pupils of birds that prey on young birds at night, keeping them at bay. (The PMCA is wary about the effectiveness of the latter two methods.)

Purple martins are beautiful to watch and have a song soothingly unique to their species. If you are lucky enough to attract and keep them, purple martins can grace your property for five months of the year.

When asked why he goes to so much trouble to attract purple martins, Curtis Bowen says, "They're like God's gift to me after a hectic day at work." Since they travel from South America to his backyard each year, "a gift from God" might be the best elucidatory to the saga of this migratory bird.

Sandra Miller is a freelance writer and a member of Surry-Yadkin EMC.



Purple martins have evolved to prefer housing maintained by humans. (Purple Martin Conservation Association photos)

All about purple martins

The Purple Martin Conservation Association provides information to anyone interested. Phone (814)-734-4420 or write: The Purple Martin Conservation Association, Edinboro University of Pennsylvania, Edinboro, PA 16444. Visit their Web site at www.purplemartin.org.

Housing specifications

Natural gourds are less expensive than the elaborate houses that can be purchased, but they require more maintenance. Martin housing should be placed in the center of the most open place available. The farther the housing is from trees, the better. Painting the natural gourds white keeps the nests cooler.

Housing compartment floor dimensions should measure at least 6-by-6 inches, but 7-by-12 inches offers better protection against predators and bad weather. Gourds should be no smaller than 8 to 14 inches in diameter. Compartment height can be from 5 to 7 inches, with the entrance hole one inch above the floor. The size of the hole can range from 1- 3 / 4 inch to 2-1/8 inches. With a little creativity, canopies can be attached to each unit to help keep the inside dry. You also can get screw-on access doors for natural gourds that you can use for observation and clean-out.

The PMCA Martin Market Place catalog offers a variety of housing options ranging in price from \$26 for a plastic "Supergourd" two-pack to \$109 for a 12-room aluminum house and \$360 for a 24-room house. Members get discounts.

Ten reasons why people fail to attract purple martins

By James R. Hill, III

(Excerpted from The Purple Martin Conservation Association.)

Housing placed too close to trees or in yards that are too enclosed.

The air space immediately around the housing, at the height of the housing, should be unobstructed in at least a couple of directions, so that they can fly to and from the housing in nearly level flight. There should be no trees taller than the martin housing within 40 feet of it, preferably 60 feet.

Landlord allows other bird species to claim the housing first.

This might require repeated lowerings of the house for nest tear-outs, plugging entrance holes with paper cups, and providing single-unit housing for the other birds. Once a martin has nested successfully, it rarely will be intimidated from reoccupying that site the following year.

Housing placed too far from human housing.

If your martin housing hasn't attracted nesting martins and isn't placed within 100 feet of your house, try moving it closer. This is because martins have "learned," through natural selection, that the closer they nest to man, the safer they are from predators.

Housing not painted white.

White housing seems to attract them best. Trim can be any color.

Housing opened up too early.

Prospective martin landlords should not open their housing until about four weeks after the first martins are scheduled to return to their area. (In North Carolina, that would be in late March.) The only exception to this rule is if a landlord has neighbors within about a mile that have established colonies. In this case, open the housing just as soon as your neighbors' first birds have returned.

Failure to open the martin housing.

At unestablished sites, martins will not recognize, as potential breeding sites, any martin housing with closed holes. In contrast, landlords that had breeding martins the previous year can leave their housing completely closed up, if they choose, until the martins return.

Vines and shrubs are allowed to grow up under the housing.

Martins tend to avoid such housing as it is much more accessible to predators, such as cats, raccoons, snakes, and squirrels. The solution is simple, remove the offending vines, bushes, or shrubs.

Housing not really "built to specifications."

Many of the published plans for martin housing, and a few of the commercially-manufactured houses, are made to improper dimensions. [See advice on this page.]

Housing attached to wires, or placed too close to wires.

Martins love to perch on wires, but they tend to avoid houses that are attached to wires or are placed within leaping distance of them. They instinctively know that squirrels can crawl along these and gain access to the house.

Landlords buy or build housing that can't be easily managed.

Landlords need to vertically lower their housing often (sometimes daily) to evict nest-site competitors and to check on martin nestlings. Martin housing should be mounted on poles that telescope up and down, or raise and lower with pulley and winch systems.





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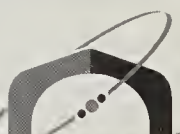
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mental math

Ask a friend to write down any two-digit number and its converse (reverse), and to find the difference between the two numbers, but to tell you nothing. Example: $81 - 18 = 63$

Now ask to be told the number that was subtracted. Example: 18

Upon hearing the number, you immediately give the answer. Example: "Eighty-one minus eighteen is sixty-three."

How did you calculate the answer so quickly? It will always be nine times the difference between the two digits in the number you are given: i.e. $9 \times (8 - 1) = 63$

The difference between a two-digit number and its converse is nine times the difference between the two digits.

Conversely, the sum of a two-digit number and its converse is eleven times the sum of the two digits. Example: $81 + 18 = (8 + 1) \times 11 = 99$



Use each letter once to spell out a partial quotation from Abraham Lincoln, moving from letter to adjacent letter in any direction, up down, left, right, or diagonally.

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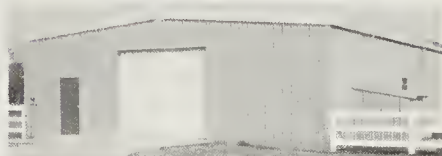
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Overcoming FEAR of PCs

Are you afraid of computers? Do you know someone who is?

If you've grown up with personal computers or been around them for any length of time, you probably take them for granted. After all, PCs have become nearly as commonplace as dishwashers. More than half of U.S. homes now have at least one PC, and 90 percent of school-age children have regular access to PCs, two-thirds from their homes, according to the U.S. Census Bureau's latest statistics.

But there's still a lot of fear and loathing about these machines. As many as 85 percent of us have at least some level of discomfort around technology, including PCs, says Larry Rosen, co-author of the book *TechnoStress: Coping with Technology @Work @Home @Play*. He has a Web site at <http://www.technostress.com>.

In work settings, two-thirds of people are "hesitant" about technology, says Rosen, a psychology professor at California State University, Dominguez Hills. Fully 80 percent of people, according to Rosen's studies, feel that workplace technology has brought additional stresses to their lives.

Although the design of PC hardware and software has improved over the years, clearly there's still room for more intelligent simplicity here. In the meantime, what do you do if you or somebody you know quakes around a PC at one level or another?

Rosen, who prefers the broader term "technostress" over the more common terms "technophobia" or "computerphobia," says the first step is to understand that "essentially everybody is feeling stressed out by technology," as borne out by his research.

"You are not alone in your fears," he says.

Second, the fact is, "technology is frustrating," he says. Whether you're dealing with less complex technologies such as cellular phones, pagers, or voice mail or more complex technologies such as computers, e-mail, or the Internet, it's inevitable for it not always to work the way you want.

Don't make the complex more complex than it already is, says Rosen. "Just because technology can do many things at the same time, this doesn't mean you have to."

Rosen has a name for this too: "multitasking madness." By doing too many tasks at once, you don't pay enough attention to any one task. Much here has to do with how time has become compressed in our increasingly frenzied lives.

"Time is indelibly stamped on our routines," says Rosen. "This gives us an impossible yardstick to measure ourselves against. We find ourselves getting impatient for a fax to go through, which might take 30 seconds, or for computer to boot, which may take one minute."

The irony here is that personal computers, while enabling us to get things done faster, also increases the expectation that things will get done faster, which can add pressure to an already pressure-filled situation and drive your anxiety level through the roof.

To overcome any anxiety, seek out help wherever you can, says Rosen, including your family. It may be a cliché in the information age that kids are computer maven, but it's often true. This shifts power away from parents and toward children.

As a parent, turn this upended power structure in your family to your advantage. "Make it a positive, a way for you to be proud of your children's knowledge and for them to teach you what they know," says Rosen. "If they know how to search the Net, for instance, let them show you. Do it as a family."

In a work setting, help is crucial as well. You shouldn't be on your own here, though too often people are. A sixth of the workers Rosen surveyed received no computer training at all, while only one-third said they received excellent or very good training.

Not surprisingly, people who receive good computer training have less computer stress. Rosen's work indicates that those business people who had "excellent to good" training had more positive reactions to technology. Those who received "fair to terrible" training had more negative reactions.

If you feel your training has been inadequate, find someone in your organization who knows the technology and who can speak about it in a down-to-earth fashion, recommends Rosen. Ask the person to show you one or two things the technology does. Then spend some time doing that. Don't worry about making mistakes.

"If you get stuck, call your friend," says Rosen. "When you want to learn more, call your friend."

As Ralph Waldo Emerson once wrote, "Fear always springs from ignorance." Knowledge is a great antidote to fear. Once you know, you're no longer afraid.

Reid Goldsborough is a syndicated columnist and author of the book *"Straight Talk About the Information Superhighway."* He can be reached at reidgold@netaxs.com or <http://members.home.net/reidgold>.

February EVENTS



February 2 through June 2, visit the Museum of Natural Sciences in Raleigh to view photos from the BG Wildlife Photographer of the Year Competition, organized by BBC Wildlife Magazine and The Natural History Museum, London. Above photo by David Pike, United Kingdom, who received a "Highly Commended, Gerald Durrell Award" for his "Polar Bear Family After Hibernation" taken in Manitoba, Canada.

MOUNTAINS (west of I-77)

Schiele Museum of Natural History

Ongoing events, Gastonia
Feb. 9, Meet a live grizzly
and new exhibit, "The Great
Bears of North America"
(704) 866-6900
www.schielemuseum.org

Asheville Art Museum

Ongoing events, Asheville
Through Feb. 6, "Raffael
Guastavino: Barcelona to Black
Mountain," (336) 368-2248

Ashe Arts Center

Ongoing events, West Jefferson
Feb. 22, Old west poems and
songs, 7:30 p.m., \$6/\$3
Feb. 27-April 13, "Young at Art"
exhibit, free, (336) 246-ARTS

Furniture Makers Exhibition

Through April 7, Asheville
Folk Art Center, Blue Ridge
Pkwy., (828) 298-7928

Wood & Metal Artists

Through Feb. 25, Hendersonville
The Center for Craft, Creativity
& Design, Kellogg Conference
Center, Mon-Fri., 1-5 p.m.
(828) 890-2050

African-American Builders

Through April 14, Asheville
Smith-McDowell House
Museum, Explores history and
impact of African-Americans on
architecture in NC, \$4.50/\$3.50
(828) 253-9231

Love Letters

Feb. 9, Mount Airy
Cross Creek Country Club,
Performance includes stars from
"The Andy Griffith Show:"
Howard Morris and Betty Lynn,
(336) 786-7998,
www.surryarts.org

Art About Women

Feb. 14, Hickory
Full Circle Arts, opening recep-
tion/open art competition,
(828) 322-7545,
www.fullcircleart.com

River North Chicago Dance Company

Feb. 22,
Spindale
Isothermal
Community
College, 7:30
p.m., \$15/\$5,
(828) 286-9990

PIEDMONT (between I-77 and I-95)

Mint Museum of Art

Ongoing
Exhibits,
Charlotte
Through March
31, "William
Morris: Myth,
Object and the
Animal,"
Through April
21, "The Gilded

Age: Treasures from the
Smithsonian American Art
Museum"
Through April 28, "Ansel
Adams: The Man Who Captured
the Earth's Beauty Part II,"
Feb. 19, speaker Dr. Barbara
Perry on the NC Pottery
Catalog, (704) 366-2504 (for
this event only)
(704) 337-2000 (general infor-
mation), www.mintmuseum.org

Ackland Art Museum

Ongoing events, Chapel Hill
Through Feb. 17, "Young
America: Treasures from the
Smithsonian American Art
Museum," (919) 966-5736
www.ackland.org

Granville County Museum

Ongoing events, Oxford
Through April, "Dinostories,"
hands-on exhibit, free,
(919) 693-9706

Museum of Natural Sciences

Ongoing events, Raleigh
Feb. 2 through June 2,
"Wildlife Photographer of the
Year from the British Natural

History Museum" exhibit,
Feb. 2, Groundhog Day
lectures, 11 a.m.-3 p.m., free
Feb. 9, "Love in the Tropics"
music, food, bar, \$15, 7:30-
10:30 p.m., (919) 733-7450,
www.naturalsciences.org,

Museum of Life and Science

Ongoing events, Durham
Through March, Mongoose
lemurs exhibit,
Feb. 1 through April 30,
"Bodies in Motion," (919) 220-
5429, www.ncmls.org

North Carolina Museum of Art

Through Feb. 17, Raleigh
"Toulouse-Lautrec: Master of
the Moulin Rouge," (919) 839-
6262, www.ncartmuseum.org

Mint Museum of Craft + Design

Through March 31, Charlotte
"Findings: The Jewelry of
Ramona Solberg"
(704) 337-2000

The Work of Joe Nesbitt

Through March 31, Wrightsville
Beach, Wrightsville Beach
Museum, resident photographer
(910) 256-2569, www.wilmington.org/wbmuseum

Regional Museum of History

Through April 2, Oakboro
Gem and mineral exhibit,
(704) 485-3612

Gunsmith Exhibit

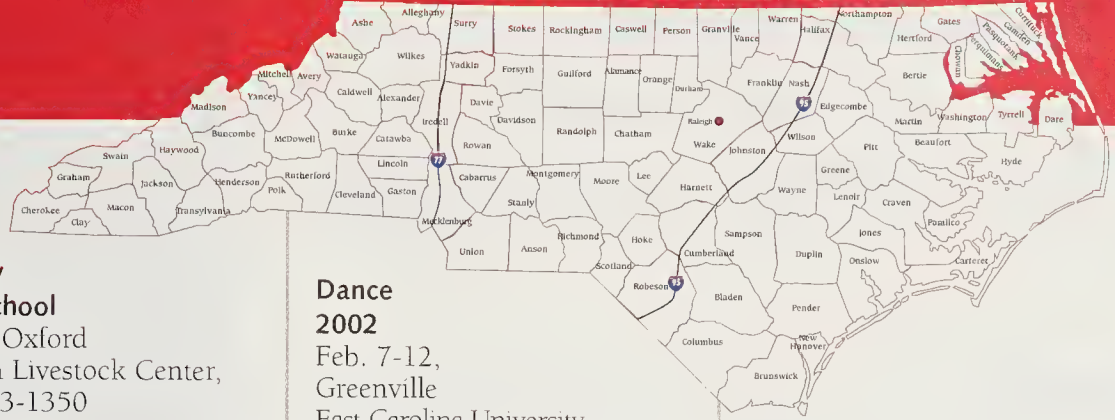
Through Sept. 22, Winton-
Salem, The Gallery at Old
Salem, "Gunsmiths of Salem
and the Vogler Family of
Artisans," (888) OLD-SALEM
www.oldsalem.org

Bob Martin Agricultural Center

Ongoing events, Williamston
Feb. 2-3, Legacy ATV Flat Track
Race, (336) 869-4900
Feb. 8-10, Down East Boat
Show, (252) 321-4287
Feb. 15-17, Horse Show,
(252) 792-1521
Feb. 22-23, Old Ford Survivor
Series Rodeo, (252) 975-3868



MOUNTAINS | PIEDMONT | COAST



African-American Arts Festival
Through March 18, Greenboro
Various locations, (336) 373-7523

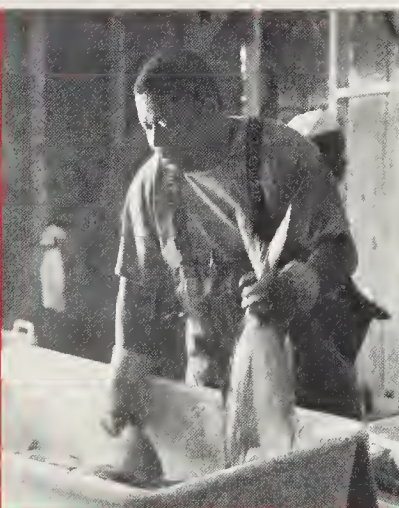
Inherit the Wind
Feb. 1-2, Salisbury
Meroney Theatre, \$14/\$12,
7:30 p.m., (704) 633-5471

Southern Farm Show
Feb. 1, Raleigh
500 exhibitors, N.C. State
Fairgrounds, 9 a.m.-4 p.m.
free, (800) 849-0248
www.southernfarmshow.com

River City Brass Band
Feb. 2, Winston-Salem
NC School of the Arts, Stevens
Center, 8 p.m., \$25/\$23, (336)
721-1945

Second Sunday Reading
Feb. 14, Chapel Hill
Wilson Library, UNC campus,
Poet Margaret Rabb, 2:30 p.m.,
free, (919) 962-3461

An Original Play
Feb. 14-16, 21-24, 28-March 3,
Raleigh, Theatre in the Park,
(919) 831-9475,
www.theatreinthepark.com



Visit the Maritime Museum in Beaufort for the "Pages of the Book" exhibit through March 10. The exhibit explores Rosemary Kramer's photographs of the residents along Pine Street in Beaufort. Above photo: Ottis Fish House, Dwayne Wallace.

Specialty Crops School
Feb. 15, Oxford
Southern Livestock Center,
(919) 603-1350

"For the Love of Herbs"
Feb. 15-17, Reidsville
Betsy Jeff Penn 4-H Camp,
conference, (336) 454-4871

Annual Southern Spring Show
Feb. 23-March 3, Charlotte
Charlotte Merchandise Mart
500 exhibitors, 800-849-0248
www.southernspringshow.com

COAST (east of I-95)

Maritime Museum
Ongoing events, Beaufort
Through March 10, "Pages of
the Book" photography exhibit,
Feb. 8, lecture and book sign-
ing, David Cecelski, "The
Waterman's Song," 3 p.m.
Feb. 23, Collector's Day (call to
participate), (252) 728-7317

UNCW Kenan Auditorium
Ongoing events, Wilmington
Feb. 9, Classic and Pops, 8 p.m.
Feb. 15, Eighth Blackbird
sextet, 8 p.m.
Feb. 26, Wendy Warner, cello,
8 p.m., (800) 732-3643

Girl Scouts Day
Feb. 2, Elizabeth City
Museum of the Albemarle
Brownie activities to earn
"Listening to the Past" badges,
9 a.m.-12 p.m., Reservations,
(252) 335-1453

Garden Show
Feb. 2-3, Wilmington
(910) 452-6393

Black History Tours
Feb. 2-23, Wilmington
Hilton Wilmington Riverside,
features slave quarters,
cemeteries, famous homes,
10 a.m., 12 p.m., 2 p.m., 4 p.m.,
(910) 762-6241

Dance 2002
Feb. 7-12,
Greenville
East Carolina University,
McGinnis Theatre, (252) 328-6829

Camellia Weekend
Feb. 8-10, Wilmington
Airlie Gardens,
(910) 793-7531, ext. 403,
airliegardens.wilmington.org

Cellist and Pianist
Feb. 9, Oriental
Pamlico County Civic and
Cultural Center, Kelley
Mikkelsen and Paul Tardif,
(252) 249-3079,
www.pamlicomusic.org

Horse-drawn Carriage Rides
Feb. 9-14, Wilmington
(910) 251-8889,
www.horsedrawntours.com

Valentine's Day Laser Show
Feb. 13-14, Elizabeth City
ECSU Planetarium, Jenkins
Science Complex, Room 146,
free (reservation required),
(252) 335-3759

Gough Duo in Concert
Feb. 14, Wilmington
St. Andrews-Covenant Church,
7:30 p.m., organ, violin, (910)
762-9693

Antiques Show and Sale
Feb. 15-17, New Bern
Sudan Temple, (252) 633-6448

Intercultural Festival
Feb. 16, Wilmington
UNC-W, Warwick Center, 11 a.m.,
food, dancing, music, (910)
962-7009

Fort Anderson Living History
Feb. 16-17, Southport
Adjacent to Orton Plantation,
Civil War reenactments,
10 a.m., (910) 371-6613

"American Spirituals"
Feb. 22, Oriental
St. Thomas Episcopal Church,
Louise Toppin, 7:30 p.m.,

free, (252) 249-3079,
www.pamlicomusic.org

Secret Garden
Feb. 22-24, Wilmington
Community Arts Center,
Thalian Association Children's
Theatre, (910) 251-1788,
www.thalian.org

de Gullah Enna Pry
Feb. 22, Wilmington
St. James Parish, "Presentation
of Plantation Life, Music &
Stories from St. John's Island,
SC," free, 12:10 p.m., lunch
reservations at (910) 763-1628

Cine Noir: Black Film Festival
Feb. 22-23, Wilmington
(910) 350-2681

Camellia Show
Feb. 23, Wilmington
Scottish Rite Temple, 12 p.m.,
(910) 270-9435

Battle of Moore's Creek Bridge
Feb. 23-24, Currie
Moore's Creek National
Battlefield, reenactment, free,
(910) 283-5591

Craven Community Concert Band
Feb. 26, New Bern
Grover C. Fields Middle School,
8 p.m., free, (252) 634-9885

LISTING INFORMATION

Deadline for April: Feb. 15
Deadline for May: March 22

A phone number must be
included with event listings
in order to be published.
Photos are welcome.

Send notices to: Carolina
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Raleigh, NC 27611 | Fax:
(919) 878-3970 | e-mail:
carolina.country@ncemcs.com

New insulated garage doors offer a decorative, secure option

By James Dulley

When it comes to overall energy efficiency and street appearance of a house, people often forget about the door on the garage. Keep in mind that on a typical home, the garage door covers more than 30 percent of the frontal area. With lifetime warranties on many of the models, a new efficient, insulated garage door can be a good investment in your home.

Even though an attached garage is not heated or cooled, its energy efficiency still has an effect on your monthly utility bills. Just think how many times each day the door from the house to the garage is opened. Each time, it lets a gust of cold or hot, humid air enter your house from the garage.

An efficient garage acts as a huge thermal buffer between your house walls and the extreme outdoor temperatures, as well as blocking the direct force of the wind against the exterior house walls.

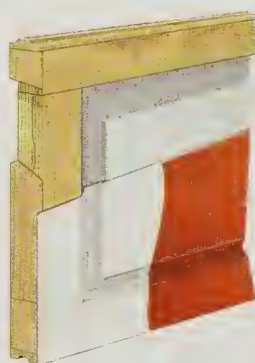
The two primary design features that impact the energy efficiency of a garage door are the thickness and type of insulation, and the airtightness of horizontal weather seals between each of the panels. The number and quality of the glass, if you select a door with windows, is also important if you plan to work in the garage. For most activities in the garage, the natural light from a series of windows is adequate without having to switch on an electric light.

Since the panels constitute the majority of a garage door, their insulation level has the greatest impact on efficiency. Insulation levels in the top-quality, two-inch-thick doors range from about R-6 to R-18. Choose a door with a plastic thermal break between the indoor and outdoor steel skins. This blocks a direct path through the metal for heat to bypass the insulation.

Injected polyurethane foam provides the highest insulation value in the limited space between the garage door skins. Injected means liquid is pumped inside and expands as it begins to foam. The other effective insulation type is a piece of polystyrene foam (like a cooler) that is placed inside the door before the two skins are sealed together.

Check the joint design between the door panels for safety and efficiency. The newest designs are pinch-resistance joints that tend to push fingers out of the joint as the door closes (great around children). With the complexity of the mating surfaces, pinch-resistant joints also tend to be very airtight.

Several of the best standard seal designs to look for are tongue-and-groove, shiplap, compression and flexible polyurethane. Of these, tongue-and-groove and shiplap joints



*Above: New garage doors are efficient, attractive and safe.
Below: Insulation totally fills the core.*

form an interlocking seal between the two panels for life-long seals. There is no flexing or compressions as with the other two designs. Some garage doors use a combination of seal designs.

Although the garage door opener has an impact on the noise level when a garage door opens, the design of the door is most significant. High-quality rollers, hardware, counterbalance springs and adjustable tracks reduce the noise to where it will not wake you, even with a bedroom above. For do-it-yourself garage door insulation, consider a garage door with a safe counterbalance spring adjuster. Some can be wound up using a cordless drill and a socket.

The newest garage doors are carriage-styles. When closed, they resemble side-hinged carriage doors. They open upward though, like a regular section garage door. Some use insulated steel with wood trim while others use all real wood with insulation. Grained stainable steel doors also resemble real wood. Beautiful copper (resists salt air) and tough composite plastic door skins are also available.

Another recent improvement is the use of energy-efficient windows in the garage door for natural light and decorative qualities. You can choose durable, crystal-clear acrylic plastic windows in attractive beveled and leaded designs. There are also optional inexpensive decorative snap-in panes that allow you to quickly change the look of the door whenever you wish.

Real glass windows are available in frosted and leaded (for privacy) and efficient double-pane styles. The newest styles have different window shapes across the door to create a sunset pattern.

Write for (or instantly download - www.dulley.com) Utility Bills Update No. 894 - buyer's guide of 11 insulated garage door manufacturers listing insulation types/levels, styles, materials, colors, glass options, seals, panel contours and features. Please include \$3.00 and a business-size SASE. James Dulley, Carolina Country, 6906 Royalgreen Dr., Cincinnati, OH 45244.

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As the outdoor gardening season draws closer, February brings visits to nurseries and garden centers, the study of catalogs, and the need to make gardening plans before spring arrives. A few hours spent planning pays dividends when planting — rewards which continue when harvesting vegetables, cutting blossoms, and viewing the colorful blooms of your labors. Now is a good time to check potted plants. If they are rootbound, repot. You can also still set out fruit and nut trees. Mulch these trees heavily with pine straw, old sawdust, heavy newspaper, cotton hulls or plastic film.

Looking ahead

When preparing for the new gardening season, keep the following in mind for a low-maintenance, attractive yard. Select fewer kinds of flowers and vegetables. Choose varieties popular with your family that do well without coddling. Easy-to-grow annuals include: petunia, marigold, zinnia, annual phlox, nasturtium, and touch-me-not. Select perennials such as daylily, iris, hollyhock, and mum for seasonal color — plants that do not call for reseeding each season. Give perennials a permanent place in the garden. Begin gardening in early spring by following a rough sketch of your layout. This simple guide will help to eliminate mistakes.

Hort hints

- ✦ Fish-filled aquariums produce water beneficial to plants. Save this water for liquid fertilizer.
- ✦ As daffodils come into bloom, use the cut flowers in vases by themselves. Daffodils produce a toxin that kills other flowers.
- ✦ Norfolk Island pine, a popular house plant sometimes used as a Christmas tree, needs a cool indoor location with adequate light to keep plant shapely. Filtered sunlight near a window is ideal.
- ✦ Most pyracanthas from nurseries have a tall main stem. To induce base branching, cut back the main stem. When new spring growth reaches eight-to-10 inches in length, cut out the tips to encourage branching. During the growing season, prune the tips of all new growth. This yields sturdy, compact, base-branching plants without forfeiting blooms or berries.
- ✦ Non-organic gardeners should replenish supplies of chemicals for insect, disease and weed killers.
- ✦ A pecan tree needs 50 feet of space to accommodate its mature size. Plant the tree at least 25 feet from a building, other tree, or wall. Avoid planting a pecan tree beneath utility lines because it will eventually have to be topped.
- ✦ Evergreen and deciduous flowering shrubs do well if planted in February. Two varieties are camellias and azaleas.

- ✦ Cut tulips for arrangements while budding. Place the flowers in a jar of warm water, and then in the refrigerator. This extends the life of blooms.

Japanese photinia

Few evergreens display such vibrant hues of red in early spring as Japanese photinia. To ensure lots of colorful new leaves, Photinia is best pruned in late winter or early spring — just before spring growth begins. After leaves turn green, encourage new growth with summer pruning. Prune each branch individually, cutting back each to a different length. If grown as a screening or defining hedge, prune to taper plants with longer limbs at the bottom. This ensures screening from the ground upward.



Break up your winter doldrums at Airlie Gardens in Wilmington for Camellia Weekend, February 8-10. Call (910) 793-7531, ext. 403, or visit airliegardens.wilmington.org for details.

Yaupon holly

Found growing naturally in woodlands of the coastal plains of the South, Yaupon holly (*Ilex vomitoria*) is also available at nurseries. Female plants of shrub and tree forms produce attractive berries in red, orange and yellow. Choose dwarf species for confined spaces. Undemanding in soil and moisture requirements, these plants are safe choices for barren spots. Since plants are brittle, plant them away from heavy traffic. Weeping forms eventually grow to about 30 feet. Tall-growing forms lend themselves to topiary pruning and training.

Fruits and nuts

There's still time to make new fruit and nut plantings, but get them into the ground as soon as possible. Good home orchard fruits include: strawberries, blueberries, plums, blackberries, muscadine and bunch grapes, Japanese persimmons, and figs — as well as dwarf apples, pears and peaches. Nut trees make good lawn trees and provide good eating. In addition to the ever-popular pecans, black walnuts and Chinese chestnuts do well in North Carolina. Your county extension office can offer advice on appropriate species. Perform dormant sprays on apples, peaches, berries and bunch grapes this month.

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Chocolate-Covered White Cheesecake

1 ½ cups chocolate wafer crumbs
3 tablespoons butter or margarine, melted

Filling:

1 package (12 ounces) vanilla baking chips, divided
3 packages (8 ounces each) cream cheese, softened
½ cup sugar
1 teaspoon vanilla extract
3 eggs

Glaze:

1 package (12 ounces) semisweet chocolate chips
1 cup whipping cream
2 tablespoons butter or margarine
2 tablespoons sugar
White and milk chocolate striped Hershey's kisses, optional
Raspberries or cranberries, optional

Combine crumbs and butter; press into the bottom of an ungreased 9-inch springform pan. Bake at 350 degrees for 10 minutes. Cool. For filling, melt 1 ½ cups vanilla chips; set aside to cool. In a mixing bowl, beat cream cheese, sugar and vanilla until well blended. Add eggs; mix well. Blend in melted vanilla chips. Pour into crust. Bake at 350 degrees for 40 minutes. Turn oven off. Let cheesecake stand in oven for 2 hours (do not open oven door). Cool completely on a wire rack. Chill 4 hours. For glaze, place chocolate chips in a medium bowl; set aside. Heat cream, butter and sugar in a heavy saucepan over medium-high heat; bring to a boil, stirring constantly. Pour over chocolate chips. Cool 3 minutes. Stir until smooth and cool. Remove rim of pan. Spread glaze over the top and sides of the cheesecake. Chill 2 hours. Melt remaining vanilla chips; drizzle over cheesecake. Garnish with kisses and raspberries if desired. Yield: 16 servings.

SEE MORE CAROLINA KITCHEN RECIPES
AT OUR WEB SITE:
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Hugs 'N' Kisses Brownie

1 package fudge brownie mix (8-inch square pan size)
1 egg
¼ cup vegetable oil
¼ cup water
1 ½ cups vanilla or white chips, divided
14 to 16 milk chocolate kisses
14 to 16 striped chocolate kisses
1 ½ teaspoons shortening

In a bowl, stir brownie mix, egg, oil and water until well blended. Fold in 1 cup vanilla chips. Pour into a greased 9-inch heart-shaped or round springform pan. Bake at 350 degrees for 35-40 minutes or until a toothpick inserted 2 inches from the side of pan comes out clean. Let stand for 10 minutes; alternate milk chocolate and striped kisses around edge of pan with points toward center. Melt shortening and remaining chips; stir until smooth. Drizzle over brownie. Cool completely. Remove sides of springform pan. Yield 10-12 servings.



Recipes are by Taste of Home magazine. For a sample copy, send \$2 to Taste of Home, Suite 4321, PO Box 990, Greendale WI 53129-0990. Visit the Web page at www.tasteofhome.com.

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